

JENNINGS

EDUCATION

BALTIMORE

1824





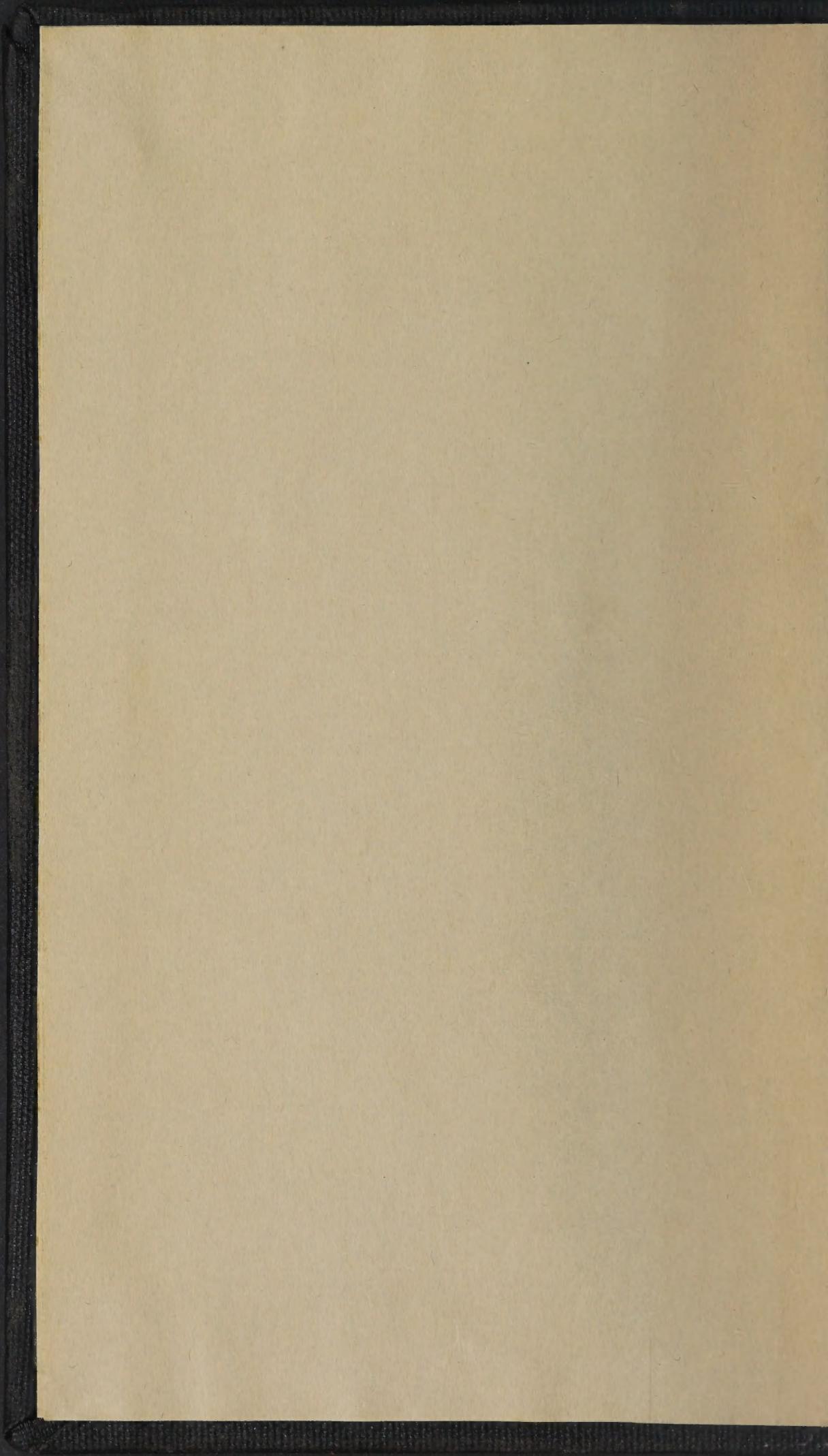


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REMARKS

UPON THE

SUBJECT OF EDUCATION:

TO WHICH ARE ADDED

THE GENERAL RULES OF THE SCHOOL,

UNDER THE APPELLATION

OF THE

ASBUR Y COLLEGE,

SOUTH CHARLES STREET, No. 2

BY S. K. JENNINGS, M. D. PRESIDENT. ✓

BALTIMORE:

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1824.

According to American principles, it is of the utmost consequence, that even this distinction, simple as it is, and which is inevitable, should be habitually regarded as an affair of mutual accommodation only, and not at all, as constituting a difference of rank. It is true, each classification requires an appropriate education; but any proper difference in this respect, should consist only in the different extent of literary attainment which may be necessary for each.

That this important consideration has been too little regarded, there can be no doubt. For, after all that our free institutions have accomplished, still there may be seen, in every circle of society, indubitable evidence of an inclination to draw a line of demarcation, between the professional man or the man of wealth and the mechanic or farmer, bordering upon the distinctions maintained in Europe, between the nobility and commonality—a distinction, at which wealth and power are ever aiming, and which none but well instructed lovers of freedom, will long prevent. This ambition is imperceptibly fostered by instructions, examples, or customs, in any degree favourable to aristocracy, and often take root and grow up to great strength, where they are not suspected to exist. American institutions ought therefore to be so organized, as to educate all classes together, upon terms of equality.—The sons of wealth and young men destined for the learned professions, should be taught to consider literature to be prostituted and abused, when it prompts the learned to look with contempt upon the farmer or mechanic; or when it is used by the man of wealth, the more abundantly to feed on the ignorance of his fellow man, and at the same time, the more effectually perpetuate his degradation. True christians contemplate all the members of their community, as being

members one of another. These are equally the principles of a well organized republic; and the promotion of institutions favourable to such principles, is of course, among all the friends of liberty and equality, a common emulation.

So much in explanation of our views of education in a national point of light, as fitted to the condition of a country, where all are born equally free, and where true merit and public service alone, can give elevation.

The more immediate interests of literature, or the commonly received methods of training the youthful mind, are yet to be considered. And when we reflect, that language, calculation, and whatever else is taught at school, are important, only as they afford the means of thinking and communicating our thoughts—of making estimates, and keeping, or transmitting a record of the whole, as there may be occasion, it will be obvious to all, that a good system of education should have an effectual tendency, at every step, to excite attention; and as early as possible to initiate the mind into an acquaintance with its own operations, so that as it progresses in its course, it may continually observe and take delight in the enlargement of its own powers. An institution or plan of instruction, failing to produce this effect, must be of little worth;—in fact, is commonly irksome to the great mass of scholars, and excites antipathy and disgust.

The philosophers of Greece, who were the teachers of the public schools, had better views upon this subject, and were permitted to manage the education of youth, better, than most of the teachers of modern times. They imposed a perfect silence upon all their novices, and required only a strict attention to the

instruction given to their advanced classes. They were not subjected to the caprice of doting parents, nor had they any difficulty in maintaining the necessary authority over their pupils. This was prescribed and secured by state legislation, and was considered an important part of their civil polity.* Parents, therefore, had no right to interfere, further, than to choose, whether their sons should spend three years of their youth in silence, or remain illiterate, in common with the slaves. This discipline, preserved the schools from noise and confusion, prevented the propensity there is in youth to play and trifle, during the hours appointed for study, and freed the teachers from the task of Sisyphus, in attempting to correct errors, which, when once established by the laws of early association, become incorrigible. Habits of order, attention, and accuracy, must eventually be productive of the most important consequences. Rousseau in his *Treatise on Education*, says, the primary reason, why we have so few good scholars and eminent men, is, because, so large a proportion of those who possess the means of obtaining a liberal education, are indulged too much by their parents in early life. The consequence is, an habitual disposition to spend their time in idleness and dissipation; to love play or useless and fashionable amusements, better than study, as long as they live. A system calculated to prevent or correct this fatal error, is certainly much to be desired. And we cannot easily lay too much stress upon the necessity of a good beginning, especially when it appears to be a fact, that the introductory parts or

*We do not mean to say that this was an universal custom, throughout all the states of Greece. It was, however, extensively practised.

first principles of education, are worse taught than the higher parts of science; that there is less good judgment and conduct in the management of the schools instituted for the instruction of children, than, in the academies and colleges, where education is commonly finished.

The greatest judgment, accuracy, and attention, are necessary for the right performance of this interesting work; and few are aware of the patient and diligent perseverance, which it requires, or have duly considered the injury which children too often sustain, where these qualifications are wanting. If ill taught or mismanaged, their education and morals are marred, and their prospects for literary distinction or useful enterprise, are forever blasted. And it is truly unaccountable, that something more effectual has not been done, to prevent an evil so fraught with fatal consequences. Permit us here to descend to a few particulars which are much to be deplored.

It is too generally the case, that when children are sent to school, they may be fairly said to be imprisoned for so many hours in the day, as are called the school-hours. Neither the arrangements of the institution, the discipline, the exercises of the school, nor the method of giving instruction, have any thing in them well calculated to engage attention. Under such circumstances it follows, that even if the children be kept in silent order, it must be a tyrannical regularity which is painfully oppressive.

When they are taught spelling, they are permitted to say the letters in a hurry, and scarcely one-half of them are sounded. After they have learned to spell a little, in this careless way, they are set to read; and the syllables are jumbled together, the words inartfully uttered, and the enunciation of the sentences

monotonous, so that it is impossible, that, either the learner or the teacher, can understand what is read. The inevitable effect is, that, when they read, or recite any thing committed to memory, it is done in a tone altogether different from their natural voices.—Hence it is that after having made considerable proficiency, they speak less distinctly, than they were accustomed to do, before they went to school. Still it is said, they can read; and then comes on the English grammar. They learn tasks, and commit to memory, the parts of speech and rules of syntax. All these they recite, in such a manner, as to make neither language nor sense. They repeat like parrots, "grammar is the art of speaking and writing correctly;" but, read and recite without perceiving the necessity of correctness;—they use words, which to them are without meaning. Parents seldom or never give themselves trouble, at least they do not find it convenient, to aid the design of the teacher, and by their influence and authority, cause their children to get their tasks at home. And schoolmasters, without the aid of parents, find it exceedingly difficult, to procure attention out of sight. Of course, when the children arrive at school in the morning, their task-lessons, half prepared, are said all in a hurry; and whilst they are getting over one part of the grammar, the preceding parts are forgotten. The teacher is in a hurry. His interest and reputation, require the semblance of doing a great deal of business; because, the parents are in a hurry, impatient to see an end of school-expenses. And, so all is hurry; and, between the two parties, the most important part of education is spoiled.

Children require much instruction, and a great deal of practice in orthography and articulation, and many

patiently reiterated explanations and trials in the different modes of speech, and in analyzing or parsing sentences, the most simple in their construction, before they can make a successful attempt to correct false syntax. But, in the usual way, when they have committed their grammar, in the very imperfect manner described above, they are taught in some sort, to perform what is called parsing; and then, before they have any proper understanding of the rules of syntax, or even of the first elements, of either words or sentences, they are made to write exercises; and, in fact, are put to the task of being critics, before they know the first principles of language.

In the mean time they learn to write; that is, they are taught to make marks and scribble copies; and when all is done, they have no idea of the symmetry or proportion of letters. They scribble on, a great deal, and perhaps the whole is ill spelled, many words blotted or omitted in every sentence; and it turns out that our young grammarian can neither spell, read, nor write, one sentence, in an accurate and proper manner.

Next comes arithmetic. Here the scholar commits to memory, a few tables and definitions, and when he has gone through all the preparatory rules, he can hardly tell, what arithmetic, addition, subtraction, multiplication, or division is;—and often, when he has finished the course which is usually taught, he is unable to tell, what is meant by proportion or a broken number. He has gone over his book, but can give no rational account of any part of his work. Demonstration, is out of the question. Having wrought a few of the examples, intended to be explanatory of the rules to which they are annexed, he is ready to suppose, that he understands all about arithmetic. This

is not a caricature. It is a true description of the kind of instruction and learning, which fall to the lot of thousands! It is a public grievance, and calls aloud for appropriate animadversion.

The laws and regulations of the state of New-York and some other states, which have secured the establishment of public schools, and which require, that all the teachers of those schools, shall undergo a careful examination, are honourable testimonials of the good sense of the people. Such an institution must soon be followed by great moral and political advantages; and it is hoped, it will be generally adopted by all the states.

A teacher, to be well qualified, must be disposed to pay a proper attention to all first principles; so as to secure a right knowledge of their intended application and consequent worth. He must know how to insist upon the necessity and elegance, of a distinct and proper utterance of every word. He must use good definitions, and inculcate the importance of great care in this particular, whatever may be the subject. He must take care, that all the recitations are performed correctly, and that every exercise is thoroughly understood. In order to captivate the attention, and from time to time afford his scholars the necessary recreation; he must amuse them with alternations of easy lessons in geography and natural history, botany, or some other light and interesting subjects. If this part of the management be skilfully conducted, it will effect a great redemption of time; and provide a valuable defence against that insidious inclination to love play and dissipation, which is the bane of good morals and useful enterprize, and which so generally prevails at public schools. Such instruction will inevitably wake up a love of learning, and train the mind, by

the most natural and regular expansion of its powers, for the higher attainments of literature; for a comprehension of the most sublime sciences, and for the complete possession of all that is valuable in letters.

Academies of distinction, and colleges, where the higher branches are taught, are not often chargeable with the mischiefs, which grow out of such a careless method of instruction. The teacher of mathematics, finds it necessary to pay attention to definitions, and to an appropriate and general manner of expression, which mathematicians all understand; and to the establishing of principles, in which all are agreed. Euclid has arranged the propositions in geometry, in so natural and methodical an order, that all succeeding problems and theorems are demonstrated by the preceding ones, and all the demonstrations are performed, in so clear and convincing a manner, that the mind of the student is at once surprized and delighted, to find, how such sublime and astonishing properties and discoveries, have been made and communicated, by means of principles so simple. In algebra, a similar process is necessarily observed, as also in all the higher branches of calculation by fluxions. So that, it becomes an inevitable part of the duty of professors, to make it obvious to their students, that all the great investigations, which have led to useful and interesting improvements in the sciences, have been accomplished by means of the simple principles in which they are exercised;—that all the great and important inventions in mechanism, have been accomplished by a combination of geometry, algebra, and philosophy, that is, by the proper use and application of the same simple, but well ordered materials. And when the student discovers, that a marked design, connexion, and ultimate utility, are implied in his

studies, he becomes pleasantly interested, and cheerfully gives the necessary attention. And if not spoiled before he comes under the direction of such a master, there is no doubt of his ultimate success.

So also, in teaching the learned languages; it is incessantly necessary, to regard the variations of words, and adjust the terminations in conformity to the mode of expression which is required. The different cases, numbers and genders, of nouns, the various comparisons and declensions of adjectives, the conjugations, moods and tenses of verbs, all must be regulated and made conformable to agreement and government. The learner is therefore, necessarily exercised in a peculiar kind of thinking, inevitably introductory to a proper understanding of the value and power of language. The exercises, which are indispensable in acquiring an accurate knowledge of these languages, imperceptibly initiate the learner into an acquaintance with his own capacity; which is always accompanied by a desire for further improvement. He may be conscious of his toil, and for a time, perhaps, almost willing to retire. Yet, in the midst of his labours, he feels a secret desire to know more of the excellence of letters. He begins to enquire, what is taste, beauty, perspicuity, strength, and sublimity of style, in prose-composition? He moves on from step to step, 'till he resolves to see the summit of Parnassus, and enjoy the luxuries of literature; the melody, harmony, descriptive beauty and sensibility which constitute the charms of poetry. And here it may be stated, as before, if the languages be properly taught, and the pupils have not been spoiled in their English education, these happy effects will certainly be produced by a proper course of classical study. It is a fact, nevertheless, that there have been considerable scholars in

science, and in the Latin and Greek classics, whose English education at the same time, was very deficient. Doctor Hutchison, provost of the university of Dublin, always said, that English education was strangely and shamefully neglected; and declared whilst he presided over that university, many hundreds had graduated, who were critics in the Latin and Greek languages, and but a few of them all, were genteel English scholars. It was customary then, as it is now, for young men to enter the university or the college, with the intention to finish their education. Indeed, they cannot be admitted, till they have made considerable proficiency in the Latin and Greek languages; and generally, they are a number of years preparing to gain their admission. To this circumstance we must refer, for an explanation of the complaint of Dr. Hutchison. And, there can be no question as to the fact, that where children have been ill taught in the first elements of the English language, the bad effects of it have not been removed, by any thing that has been afterwards done, even if they were sent for correction to the most distinguished universities or colleges in the world. This is an important affair, which merits the most serious consideration, and is conclusive proof, of the great error of committing the instruction of children to incompetent teachers. There is every reason to believe, it is done inconsiderately, and without any apprehension of the mischiefs which have been pointed out in this essay. And those, whose duty it may have been to shew its evil tendencies, have overlooked it, as an affair of too little moment to claim attention. In the mean time the evil has taken deep root, and requires uncommon exertion to correct it.

It seems probable that much might be done wher-

ever it may be found practicable, by a combination of three or more teachers of competent abilities,—united in a common interest, in a permanent institution, where they might have their classes so well taught and governed, that newly admitted scholars should see no bad examples, hear no false pronunciation or offensive tones;—so that all which should be seen and heard, might afford them useful instruction.*

It is necessary that the association should consist of three: 1st, That there may be a sufficient number of advanced classes, which may serve as models for those below them in the course. 2dly, That the institution may carry with it sufficient importance, to excite public notice, and afford the teachers the means of living. 3dly, That the regular business may move on without interruption, whilst any one of the teachers, upon whichsoever the service may devolve, may be taking the necessary pains in fowarding dull scholars, correcting their bad habits and, fitting them for suitable places in the respective classes; and, when it may be necessary or proper, to amuse those scholars who have been wearied with study and attention to difficult subjects, with alternate lessons in geography, natural history, &c.

Such a combination of effort, for the benefit of the rising generation, is not new. Any well educated

* There are circumstances in which such an arrangement would be impracticable. The want of population, the want of teachers, &c. &c. Good schools will be none the worse for this suggestion. Competent teachers with limited select schools will perform their own work in their own way, better, than they would do, if they attempted any change. Such, whether male or female, stand out of the reach of the reproofs intended to be given by this paper.

man, with a little reflection upon the subject, would be apt to think of the same plan. And, in fact, something similar to this system was proposed, more than a century ago, by a number of literary characters of great distinction. Dean Swift, Dr. Sheridan, and the Earl of Roscommon, were leaders in the contemplated enterprize. And proposals were actually made for obtaining parliamentary aid, to enable them to carry their plan into operation. But being coldly received by men in power, these gentlemen relinquished their design in disgust. The manuscript, containing a detail of their project, however, remained in the hands of Dr. Sheridan, and that part of their system which respected English education, was successfully adopted by the accomplished Mrs. Knowles, who was the doctor's niece, and perhaps the most celebrated female teacher of the age in which she lived. The estimation in which this very learned lady was held, by Dr. Johnson and his literary friends, is well known.

It is only necessary to add, that each of the teachers should be sufficiently skillful and diligent, to give his instructions in an engaging manner; and whenever it is practicable, by way of lecture. That our universities and colleges are calculated to present additional advantages to young men, because of the greater variety and extension of the instructions afforded by a number of professors, is now well understood. It is also as well known, that instruction is more effectual when given by way of lecture. These are facts, which seem to have their foundation in the physical and moral condition of man, in his forming state:—in the time of infancy and youth. Impetuous and curious, he hastens from object to object, eager to accumulate his knowledge of things within, and beyond his reach; and cannot be confined like the pa-

tient philosopher, to fasten his attention long to any one thing. Hence it is, that a child when called upon to be seated with his book, is tired at once. If seated and required to attend to the reading of another, the effect is the same. But let his attention be invited to the narration of some tale, or the description of some animal or other thing, within his comprehension, and for any reasonable time, he will evince as deep an interest as an adult. This eagerness to see and hear, which naturally and necessarily precede thought and study, ought to be regarded more attentively in our systems of education. And children will learn more willingly and progress more advantageously, when they can constantly see many interesting things in prospect, towards the attainment of which they feel themselves allured by the examples of those who are older. They will gradually desire the possession of things which are still kept in sight, whilst others are taking hold of them, and whilst the same teachers are giving them encouragement by the assurance, that the prize is fully within their power. In fine, it is a sorrowful fact, that children are ruined by their exclusion from the society and conversation of men. And it is high time that adult citizens should remember with increasing interest, that if children are compelled to look for their amusement and information only among their fellows, they have a poor opportunity to advance the dignity or character of man.

THE
ASBURY COLLEGE

Is organized and will be conducted upon a plan conformable to these views and principles. The patrons and friends of the college, may, therefore, expect a constant and faithful attention to those branches which are universally necessary. To state the particulars;—correct spelling is indispensable. Deficiency in orthography must be perpetually liable to exposure and always argues inattention. Good reading is an accomplishment, which is too seldom acquired, but never too highly appreciated. To this we add the art of writing a fair hand; which though simple and mechanical in itself, often secures to those who can perform it well, very important advantages. Also common arithmetic, which is necessary to every man of business. The practical mathematics;—such as mensuration, surveying, gauging, &c. and bookkeeping. These are so frequently necessary and so universally afford convenience and benefit to those who possess them, that every English scholar of tolerable pretensions is expected to understand them. A knowledge of general geography, the art of mapping, and a good practical acquaintance with English grammar, are likewise acquirements the value of which is now generally acknowledged. Every scholar, therefore, of sufficient age, will be very carefully instructed in all these particulars.

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There are other branches which are also necessary for the completion of a genteel English education, which perhaps ought to be particularly mentioned. A sketch of Natural History, of course including a grammar of Botany; each branch of this subject should be explained by a suitable reference to plates and specimens, so as to present an outline introductory to a proper classification of the animal, vegetable and mineral kingdoms; a short but scientific view of Chymistry; Euclid's Elements;—Algebra;—Natural Philosophy and Metaphysics;—Ancient Geography;—Ancient History and Chronology. Instruction in these three last mentioned particulars, should be accompanied by a careful reference to Lavoisne's Charts, as he has improved them on the plan of Le Sage;—and whilst engaged in this course, it should be continued down to modern times. This is as much as can be well done upon the subject of history. To collect historical materials sufficient for comparing the national character and polity, of the several countries constituting the civilized world, would itself be the work of at least ten years:—A work, which none but statesmen and literary men in easy circumstances, commonly perform. It is intended in due time, to see that these particulars are introduced, each in its proper place.

The Latin Classes will be taught to read the Latin Primer, Cornelius Nepos, Cæsar, Sallust, Virgil, Horace, Cicero, Livy, Tully's Offices, and Tacitus.

The Greek Classes will read selections from the Greek Testament, Græca Minora, Græca Majora, Homer's Iliad, and Longinus.

Having presented this brief but comprehensive view, of the course of instruction which is contemplated at the ASBURY COLLEGE, the subscriber thinks proper to add, that he has procured the charts of La-

voisne, and a sufficient number of plates explanatory of Natural History, Botany, &c. for a beginning; of these the number will be increased, as there may be further necessity.

Maps will be made by the students and scholars to any necessary extent, as a part of their geographical exercises.

As Geography, Zoology, Botany, Mineralogy, &c. are intended to serve as the literary amusements of the College—these branches will be taught without the expense of books;—which is the more desirable, as books upon these subjects are very costly.

To conclude, it will be his special care to see that the institution shall make good classical and genteel English scholars, in a pleasant and economical way; and that the whole system of instruction shall have a suitable tendency to confirm republican feelings, captivate attention, inspire a proper sense of the worth of time, and excite a becoming taste for intellectual and moral improvement.

SAMUEL K. JENNINGS.

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TERMS OF TUITION,

FIRST CLASS.

Spelling, Reading, and Writing, &c. - - - - - \$6 00

SECOND CLASS.

Reading, Writing, English Grammar, Arithmetic,
Book-keeping, Geography, and Natural History, : 8 00

THIRD CLASS.

Reading, Writing, English Grammar, Arithmetic,
Practical Mathematics, including Surveying, Na-
vigation, Guaging, Geography, Mapping, Natu-
ral History, &c. &c. - - - - - 10 00

FOURTH CLASS.

Latin, Greek, French, Spanish, or Hebrew Lan-
guages, - - - - - 10 00

FIFTH CLASS.

Higher Classics, associated with a general course
of Mathematics, Natural Philosophy, and Astro-
nomy, &c. &c. - - - - - 12 00

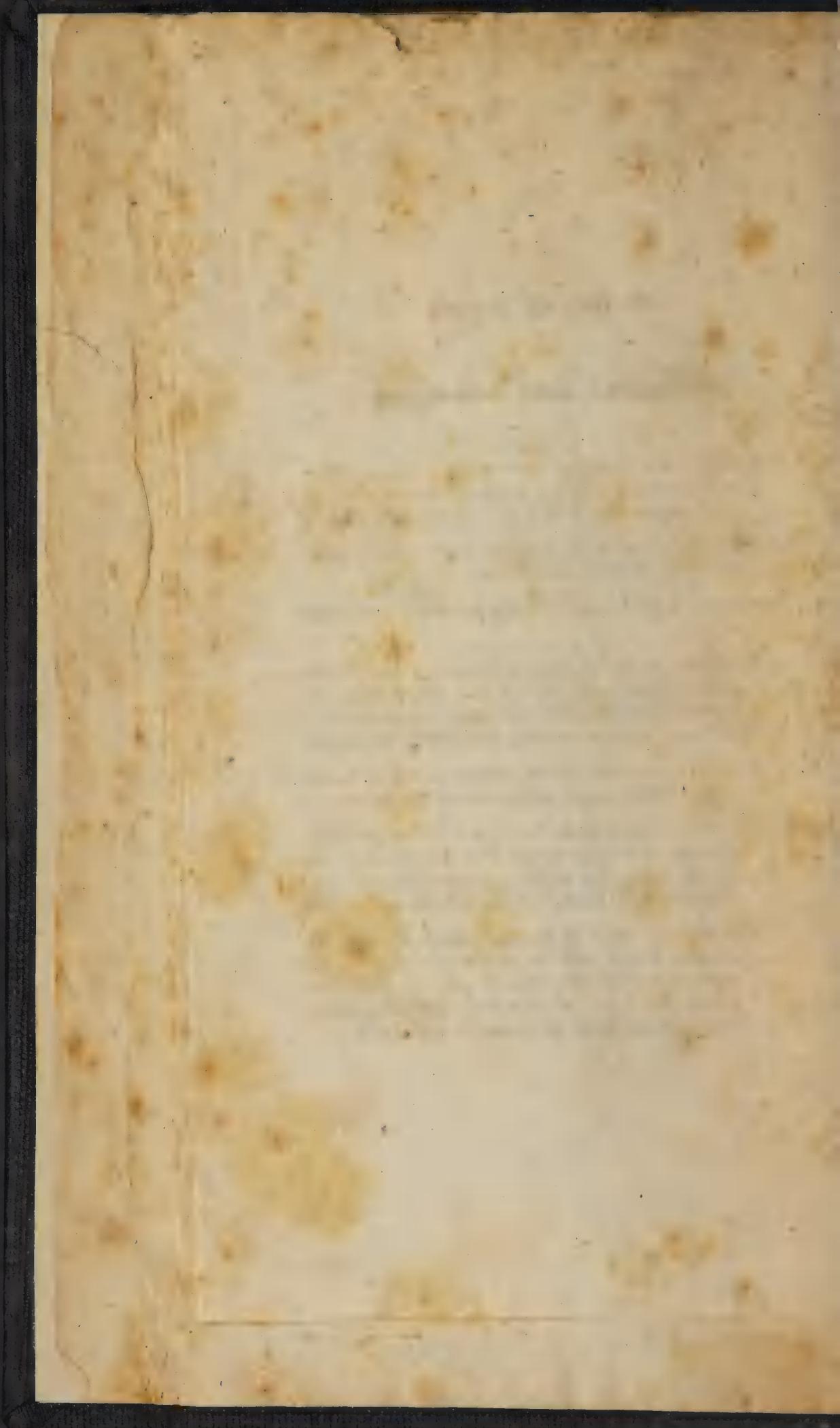
General Rules

FOR

STUDENTS AND SCHOLARS.

1. Every one is expected to be in his place, precisely at eight o'clock in the morning, during the summer season, and two o'clock in the afternoon.
2. No one is allowed to leave his seat, or speak to his fellows, without permission.
3. Every one is required to keep himself clean and neat.
4. Every one sufficiently advanced is expected to employ himself with his book at home, at least two hours every day. Without this rule, too much of the morning and evening time would be wasted.
5. No one is permitted to buy, sell, or exchange books, without the special permission of his teacher.
6. All will be compelled to review their work frequently, as they progress, that their studies may be the more thoroughly understood, and, that they may at all times be ready for an examination.
7. Any that are found to be incorrigible shall be dismissed; notice will be previously given to his parents or guardian, that it may be effected in a way, the least calculated to hinder his subsequent prospects of amendment and credit.

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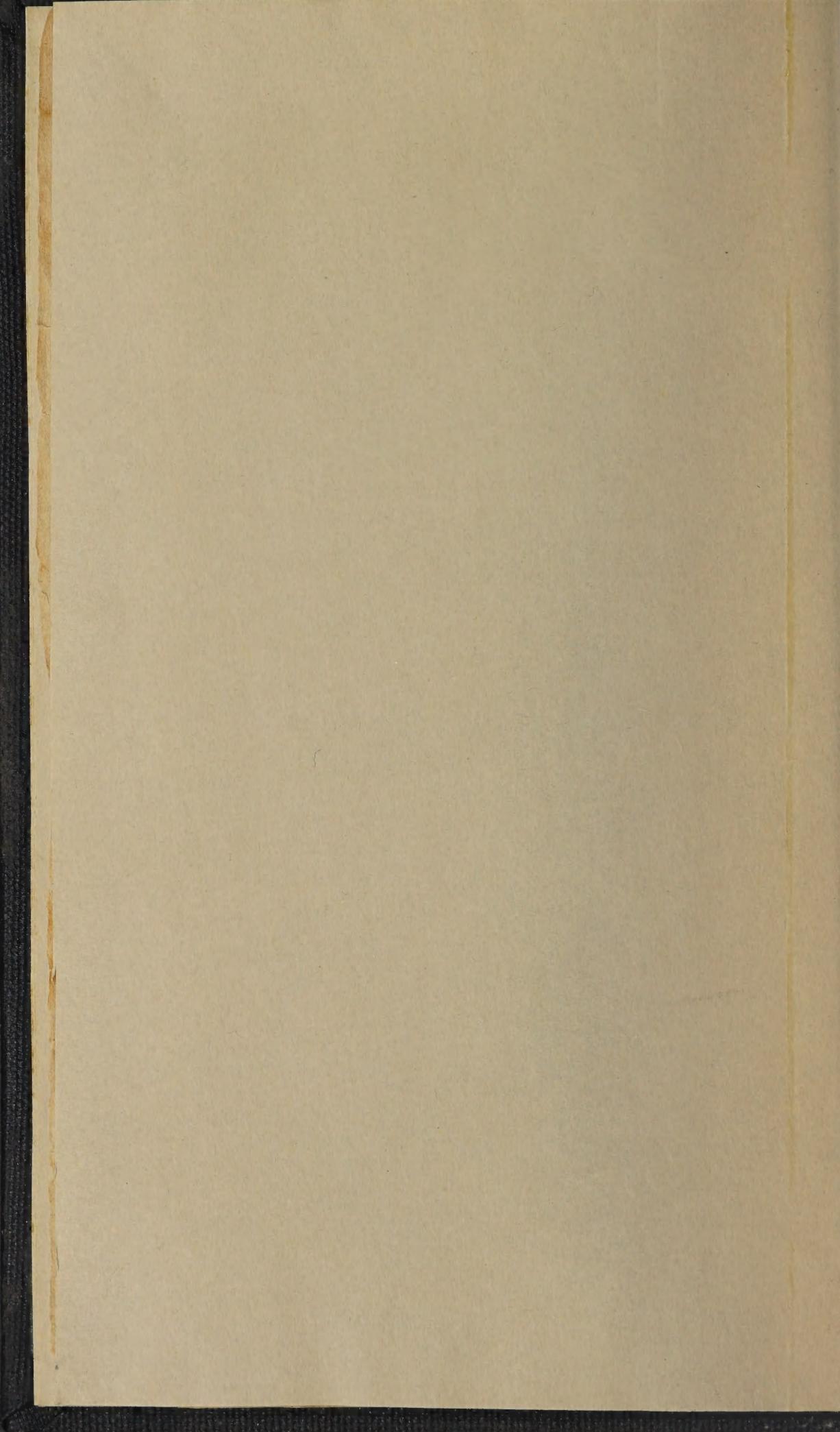


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